

103.  
A  
SERMON;

PREACHED AT

WORSHIP-STREET, SHOREDITCH,

OCTOBER 18, 1795;

BEING

A SINCERE TRIBUTE OF RESPECT

TO THE MEMORY OF

THE REV. SAMUEL STENNETT, D.D.

THE REV. ANDREW KIPPIS, D.D. F.R.S. A.S.

AND

THE REV. RICE HARRIS, D.D.

TO WHICH ARE PREFIXED,

A FEW PARTICULARS OF THEIR LIVES AND WRITINGS.

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By JOHN EVANS, A. M.

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*Ld. D. J. Whittingham*

INSATIATE ARCHER! could not ONE suffice?  
Thy shafts flew *thrice*, and *thrice* my peace was slain;  
And *thrice* e'er yonder Moon had fill'd her horn!

YOUNG.

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[PRICE ONE SHILLING.]

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EXPLANATION

The British Museum has been a long time in the process of collecting and arranging its collections. It is now in a position to receive and deposit in its collections, and to exhibit in its galleries, the objects of natural history, and the objects of art, which are deposited in its collections. It is now in a position to receive and deposit in its collections, and to exhibit in its galleries, the objects of natural history, and the objects of art, which are deposited in its collections.



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## PREFACE.

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THE Author being just returned from a long excursion into Wales, has had little time afforded him to draw up the following discourse, which (agreeable to the request of some much esteemed friends) is now respectfully laid before the Public. Indeed the Reader will find it to be a plain and sincere tribute of respect to the memory of three good men, with whom he had the honour of being acquainted; and from two of whom, the Rev. Dr. Stennett, and the Rev. Dr. Kippis, he experienced very considerable acts of kindness.

As it is probable that this discourse may fall into the hands of persons who were little acquainted with the deceased, a few particulars of their lives, and also of their writings, are here subjoined. For a minute detail of their characters, the Reader is referred to their respective Funeral Sermons. The particulars here introduced, though very few, may serve to impress the Reader with a sense of the general loss which has been sustained, and enable him to enter more thoroughly into the Preacher's feelings, and into the reflections which the Sermon offers to his serious attention.

*Dr. Samuel Stennett* was born at Exeter, where his father was, for several years, Pastor of a Baptist Church. He was educated under Mr. Hubbard, an eminent theolo-

gical Tutor, and under Dr. John Walker, a celebrated Linguist. He was a member of the Church of Christ, meeting in Wild-street, London, for more than *fifty* years, and *forty seven* of them he was in the Ministry, first assisting his father, and then succeeded him as Pastor in the year 1758. He died at his favourite residence, Muswell Hill, August 24th, 1795, in the 68th year of his age. His Funeral Sermon was preached by the Rev. Dr. Jenkins, and his Funeral Oration pronounced by the Rev. Abraham Booth.

Scarcely two months before his decease, the writer of this short narrative passed a most agreeable day with him at Muswell Hill. As he kept the *seventh-day Sabbath*, enquiries were then made respecting the principles of the Sabbatharians. Dr. Stennett was pleased to communicate to him several particulars respecting their tenets, which are inserted under the article *Sabbatarians*, in the Second Edition of a small work, entitled, *A Sketch of the several Denominations of the Christian World*.

His works are, 1. Remarks on the Christian Minister's Reasons for administering Baptism by sprinkling.—2. Discourses on Personal Religion, two volumes.—3. Domestic Duties.—4. The Parable of the Sower.—5. The Divine Authority, and various use of the Holy Scriptures.—6. A Sermon on the Death of the celebrated Howard.—7. A Sermon on the Decease of the Rev. Caleb Evans, D. D. Together with a few other occasional Sermons, and miscellaneous Pieces.

A sketch of the character of Dr. Stennett, appeared in the Protestant Dissenter's Magazine for September, which is drawn up with considerable judgment and ability.

Dr.



*Dr. Andrew Kippis* was born at Nottingham, educated under Dr. Doddridge, and first settled at Spalding in Lincolnshire. He removed to Dorking in Surry, and officiated there in his ministerial capacity for eleven years. He was then invited to the Church of Christ, Prince's-Street, Westminster; continued Pastor over them for 43 years, and died there, October 9th, 1795, in the 71st year of his age. His Funeral Sermon was preached, and the Oration at the Grave delivered, by the Rev. Dr. Abraham Rees.

His works are, 1. *Biographia Britannica*, or British Biography, folio; volumes the first, second, third, fourth, and fifth.—2. A Vindication of the Protestant Dissenting Ministers, with regard to their application to Parliament in the matter of Subscription.—3. Six Discourses delivered by Sir John Pringle, when President of the Royal Society, to which is prefixed the Life of the Author.—4. Considerations on the Provisional Treaty with America, and the preliminary Articles of Peace with France and Spain.—5. Observations on the late contests in the Royal Society.—6. A Sermon preached at the Old Jewry, 26th April 1786, on the institution of the New College at Hackney.—7. The Life of Dr. Lardner.—8. The Life of Captain James Cook.—9. A Charge at two Ordinations, 1788.—10. A Sermon preached at the Old Jewry on the 4th of November 1788, before the Society for commemorating the glorious Revolution.—11. Address delivered at the interment of the Rev. Dr. Richard Price, on the 26th April 1791.—12. Sermons on practical Subjects.—13. The Life of Dr. Doddridge, prefixed to the Seventh Edition of his Family Expositor.—14. A Sermon on the Fast, February 28, 1794.—15. Dr. Doddridge's Course of Lectures; to which are now added a great number of references, and many notes of reference to the various writers on the same topics, who have appeared since the Doctor's Decease; 2 vols.—16. A  
Funeral

Funeral Sermon for the Rev. Mr. Toller, to which is added the Funeral Oration, by the Rev. Hugh Worthington, jun.

From this list of *Dr. Kippis's* writings, it appears that they were partly theological, and partly biographical. Biography, indeed, was a species of writing in which he delighted. His *Biographia Britannica*, which contained the lives of the celebrated and learned men who have appeared in Great Britain and Ireland, must have cost him immense pains. In writing the lives of *Divines* he particularly excelled, and he has essentially served the interests of religion, by transmitting to posterity an impartial estimate of the works, and a faithful delineation of the character, of several ministers, who were *burning and shining lights* in their day and generation. His life of the excellent Dr. Doddridge (his old tutor) whom he entitles, "his benefactor, his friend, and his father," does the greatest honour both to his abilities and to his feelings.

May *Dr. Kippis* have left behind him a biographer who shall estimate *his* labours with equal judgment, and who shall record *his* virtues with equal fidelity!

*Dr. Stennett* and *Dr. Kippis* were not only acquainted, but also held a correspondence with several respectable clergymen, and even with some of the dignitaries of the Established Church. This is the more particularly mentioned, because it reflects an honour upon both parties. Were christians of different persuasions to cherish with each other a more frequent intercourse, the prejudices of party might subside, and the common interests of christianity would be more essentially advanced.

*Dr. Rice Harris* was a native of Wales—educated under Dr. Jennings, and became pastor of a congregation in Hanover-street, London, on the death of Dr. Earle, in

1768.



1768. He published only two sermons. Those who attended his ministry, speak highly of the intrinsic merit of his discourses, and have expressed a wish that some of them may be laid before the public. He died at Kensington, after a long and painful illness, October 10, 1795, (the day after Dr. Kippis) in the 65th year of his age. His Funeral Sermon was preached, and his Funeral Oration pronounced, by the Rev. James Manning of Exeter.

The recent mortality amongst ministers has been great. Within these few months have been numbered with the dead, *Romaine, Toller, Gentleman, Flexman, Stennett, Kippis, Harris, Beddome, and Clark.* These were ministers of talents and respectability in their several connections, and, excepting Mr. Romaine, were all of the Dissenting Interest.

It is somewhat remarkable, that the *last* publication good *Dr. Kippis* ever gave to the world, was the *funeral* sermon for Mr. Toller—and that the text should have been that triumphant declaration of the Apostle's: *I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith.—Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.*

The introduction to this sermon of *Dr. Kippis*, is so exceedingly apposite to the melancholy providences which have since taken place amongst us, that we shall close this brief narrative by presenting it to the Reader's attention:

“ The death of our friends cannot be otherwise than affecting to the mind; and every principle of humanity, reason, and religion, not only allows but justifies the emotions of grief on such an occasion. Provided we do not transgress

transgress the limits which piety and resignation point out; the rising sigh, the falling tear, and the inward pang, are so far from being the acts of weakness or of sin, that they are the natural, the just, the Christian tribute of the affection and respect which we owe to the persons who have been closely connected with us in our mortal journey.

“ But our situation, on the loss of those who have been dear to us, must be extremely different, according to the different circumstances attending their removal; and especially, according to the goodness or badness of their tempers and characters. If we have no well grounded hope with regard to their eternal blessedness, there is cause for deep and pungent anguish. In that case the springs of sorrow will be prodigiously increased; and all the solemnities accompanying the departure of our relatives be invested with double horror. But if, on the contrary, we have solid reason to believe that our friends are translated to the mansions of unfading felicity, how much will this thought alleviate our concern for their death! It is true, that we have the pain of being deprived of them; and to be deprived of such valuable persons is a real affliction. There will, however, be a sweet consolation, and gladness intermingled with our grief: for it is, indeed, a most delightful thing when we can say of our deceased acquaintance and relations, that they have *fought a good fight, that they have finished their course, that they have kept the faith; and that henceforth there is laid up for them a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give them at the last day, and to all that love his appearance.*”



SERMON,



# SERMON, &c.

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## PSALM XII. I.

HELP, LORD; FOR THE GODLY MAN CEASETH: FOR THE  
FAITHFUL FAIL FROM AMONG THE CHILDREN OF MEN.

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**H**OW awful is the stroke of death! How wide is the extent of its ravages! *All flesh is grass, and the goodliness thereof as the flower of the field.*

The loss which the world in general, and which the Protestant Dissenters in particular, have sustained by the successive removals of the Rev. Dr. STENNETT, the Rev. Dr. KIPPIS, and the Rev. Dr. HARRIS, is severely felt, and will be long lamented. Contemplating the recent and sudden decease of these three useful and eminent ministers of Jesus Christ, we are reminded of the solemn and affecting words of the Psalmist:—*Help, Lord; for the godly Man ceaseth: for the faithful fail from among the children of men.*

Of late, there has been a more than ordinary mortality among the faithful servants of God.

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This, joined with the consideration that there are very few young ministers to succeed them, is peculiarly affecting; and should lead us to adopt the prayer of David, which I have selected as a proper portion of Scripture to be improved on this melancholy occasion.

Three enquiries may be made respecting the passage before us:

First—What constitutes the character of a *godly Man*, as applied to a minister of Jesus Christ?

Secondly—In what respect the *godly man ceases*?

Thirdly—With what views are we to look up to God for succour, when *the godly Man ceases, and the faithful fail from among the children of men*?

First, What constitutes the character of a *godly man*, as applied to a minister of Jesus Christ?

An attentive hearer will immediately perceive that the text consists of two clauses, explanatory of each other. The *godly* and the *faithful*, though here distinctly specified, will be found, on close examination, to be descriptive of *one* character, contemplated under different points of view. The term *godly*, indicates the excellence of the individual, simply considered; the appellation *faithful*, refers to the discharge of certain duties resulting from



from the situation in which Providence hath placed him. The inspired writers delineate the respective characters of mankind with precision and energy. The title *godly Man*, may be applied with justice to private Christians, and with still greater justice to the *faithful* Ministers of the Gospel. Indeed, whoever lives *soberly, righteously, and GODLY*, may lay claim to this elevated title. But we are now more especially called upon to consider the ministers of the christian religion, under this amiable and dignified character. With what propriety, it is our present business to shew.

First, A faithful minister may be entitled a *godly Man*, because he explains and defends the *principles of Godliness*.

Christianity is a system of religion which comes from God, and its immediate tendency is to promote the interests of holiness. The views given by Revelation, of the nature, perfections, and government of God—of the person and mission of Jesus Christ—of the fallen condition of human nature—and of the rewards and punishments of the world to come, are worthy of that divine origin to which they make an express claim. These principles of religion are contained in the Bible, and are to be held up to the notice and admiration of the children of men. Inattention, indolence, or prejudice (sometimes a combination of these unhappy causes) prevent the generality of mankind from becoming

acquainted with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Hence arises the necessity, that certain persons, who are properly qualified, should assume the office of instructors, and use every just means to enlighten the understanding and meliorate the manners of their fellow creatures. Most men want truth to be presented to them; and require also, that some alluring method be adopted to obtain their acceptance of it. The almost endless variety of understandings, and the equally numerous prejudices which attach themselves to the human mind, make it necessary that religious truth should be explained with great simplicity. Its principles should be clearly laid down, and judiciously arranged. By the former, Truth gains an entrance into the soul—by the latter, its continuance there is secured. This being the duty of every teacher, especially of the minister of the glorious Gospel, hence arises the propriety of denominating HIM a *godly Man*; who thus carefully and judiciously explains the principles of godliness.

Nor is it the faithful minister's only province to *explain* religious principles; he is also obligated to *defend* them against the attacks of enemies, and the misrepresentation of friends.

This observation will not be disputed by persons who are conversant with Ecclesiastical History, or acquainted with the present state of the world. Truth, of every kind, has to boast of enemies as well



well as of friends. Atheists and Deists have never failed to attack, even by the most unfair means, the Revelation of Jesus Christ. Misrepresentation, ridicule, and abuse, are the most common weapons with which they assail the venerable fabric of our religion. But how often have *able Ministers of the New Testament* arisen in their strength to detect the sophistry, expose the dissimulation, and chastise the insolence of the avowed champions of infidelity? It would be an endless task to enumerate the incomparable treatises, which have been written by Ministers of the Gospel, in the defence and illustration of the Christian Religion. Indeed, such ministers may be emphatically termed—THE GUARDIANS OF EVANGELICAL TRUTH.

But it is the faithful minister's province also, to detect and lay open the misrepresentations, which are too often given of religion by its well-meaning but injudicious friends. The contents of the Bible are frequently contemplated through the mists of prejudice. Hence, in every age of the Church, have opinions been broached, which outrage the first principles of natural and revealed religion. Ignorant and gloomy men will, through the melancholy cast of their own unhappy constitutions, consider the Divine Being as an arbitrary tyrant, delighting in the misery of mankind, and accordingly ascribe to him pro-  
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ceedings which, in our fellow-creatures, we should pronounce atrocious acts of cruelty. On the other hand, men of a light and airy turn of mind, will thoughtlessly strip the Divine Being of his justice; deny the certainty of future punishment, and attribute to him a disregard of all penalties, even of those by which good governments are uniformly directed. Both these extremes are delusive and unscriptural. But such opinions, and many more equally pernicious and absurd, have been promulgated and defended. It is, however, the duty of a faithful minister to expose their futility, to guard the minds of the rising generation against their baneful influence, and, on suitable occasions, and with a proper temper, to proclaim in its native purity, *the truth as it is in Jesus*.

Secondly, A faithful minister may be entitled a *godly Man*, because he recommends and exemplifies *the practices of godliness*.

The scriptural representation of godliness embraces, in one ample circle, our duty to God, to man, and to ourselves. Our relative situation renders our temper and behaviour of distinguished importance. To be devout towards the Supreme Being; to be peaceable, candid, affectionate, and humane to our fellow creatures; and within ourselves to be humble, cheerful, and contented, are the peculiar duties enjoined upon



us in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. A minister is obligated by his sacred office, to recommend these duties with frequency, with energy, and with impartiality. He is to describe their nature—ascertain their extent—point out their obligation, and expatiate on the innumerable advantages which are annexed to a life of obedience. And, if he properly understand the revealed will of Heaven, he will be careful to recommend them on those Evangelical principles which are laid down in the New Testament. Thus will he declare *the whole counsel of God*.

Nor will he only recommend *these practices of godliness* to others, in his labours from the pulpit, and in his publications from the press; he will also exemplify them in his temper and conduct. All, indeed, who *profess to name the name of Christ should depart from iniquity*. But this, however just, is only a negative excellence; for we are not merely *to depart from iniquity*, we are also to be found in the cheerful and constant practice of righteousness. But ministers are men, and must be expected, therefore, to discover the imperfections of men. It is, however, their aim and ambition, that their deportment on every occasion might accord with the sublime morality of the New Testament. To this they are more especially impelled by a peculiar solemnity of obligation, and by the consciousness that the eyes  
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of the world are directed towards them. That they never fail in the practice of godliness cannot be supposed. That it is the constant wish and endeavour of the faithful minister, *to hold forth the word of life*, may be safely and firmly asserted. A *godly Man*, then, is an appellation which may, with justice, be applied to a faithful Minister of the Gospel; because he explains and defends the *principles* he recommends; and exemplifies the *practices of godliness*.

That this title of *the godly Man* did, in reality, belong to each of the three eminent ministers, whose decease we now lament, none who knew them will be disposed to deny. Their characters will be delineated and given to the world in their respective funeral sermons, by pens far more capable of doing them the justice they amply deserve.

One trait, however, in their character must not pass unnoticed. The cause of the Protestant Dissenters, which asserts the right of private judgment, and maintains the sufficiency of scripture, lay near their hearts. The principles of non-conformity were, by them, thoroughly understood, and judiciously defended. In an age, marked, perhaps, beyond all others for looseness of principle and eccentricity of opinion, they stood firmly to their posts. For men of their genius, literature, and talents, to decline for conscience



science-sake the emoluments of an Established Church; to subject themselves to obloquy and reproach; and to rest contented with the prospect of invisible rewards; redounds highly to their honour, is an ample testimonial of their piety, and will embalm their memory to distant generations! *They esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for they had respect unto the recompence of reward.*

Nor were they to be ranked amongst those *inconsistent* characters, who, whilst they asserted the right of private judgment, in opposition to the Church of England, frowned on their fellow christians for difference of opinion, and delivered them over to the horrors of future punishment. This detestable species of bigotry they regarded with abhorrence. Knowing and feeling the weakness of human nature, they dared not prescribe to others, with a proud infallibility, what they were to believe, and what they were to practise. Firmly attached, indeed, to their *own* views of divine truth, they ceased not, on every proper occasion, to propagate them. A frigid indifference, and an unmerciful zeal, were equally the object of their detestation. With what emphasis Dr. Stennett and Dr. Kippis expressed themselves to me, a little before their death, on this very

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subject,

subject, will leave upon my mind an indelible impression.

But whilst they indulged a generous candour for the differences which subsist among christians, they strenuously recommended an enlightened zeal, and a prudent activity. Though they warmly vindicated the cause of civil and religious liberty, for which their forefathers bled, yet they cautioned mankind lest this liberty might degenerate into licentiousness. Partaking largely of the piety and integrity which distinguished the first non-conformists, they lamented the late and irregular attendance on divine worship, too prevalent amongst modern professors, and inveighed loudly against that conformity to the world, and that love of sordid interest, which, in the present day, prove so often the disgrace of the Christian profession. A monkish austerity, and a criminal indifference, were alike the objects of their aversion. They inculcated upon the whole Christian world, to be  *fervent in Spirit, serving the Lord.*

Some christians indeed may be surprised at my having blended together three ministers of different religious sentiments—but our good opinion should extend to persons of *every* denomination who *love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and in truth.* Thus should we preserve the unity  
of



*of the spirit in the bond of peace, for there is one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God, and Father of all\*.*

Secondly, In what respects are we to understand the words of my text, when David declares that the godly Man *ceases*, the faithful *fail* from among the children of men?

The pious and ingenious Mr. Matthew Henry, commenting on this passage, observes, that the godly Man *ceases* or *fails* by death or desertion. To *cease* by death appears to be the most natural and significant interpretation of the term. And here the Psalmist does not allude merely to the *ceasing* or *failing* of the natural functions of life. No; he had a higher and nobler reference than the respiration of the lungs, and the circulation of the blood. He refers to their usefulness in the church, and in the world at large. By death, the godly Man *ceases* to hold the station which Providence had assigned him, and which he had long and honourably occupied. He *ceases* to make those ardent and reiterated exertions in

\* See Dr. Leechman's Sermon, intitled, *The Character and Duty of a Minister of the Gospel*. Young Ministers of every denomination should give it a serious and frequent perusal. This discourse (as well as that on *Prayer*) has been greatly and justly admired. Indeed the whole of Dr. Leechman's works are exceedingly valuable, for they inculcate, in plain yet elegant language, those views of the christian religion which are honourable to God, and beneficial to mankind.

behalf of virtue and of piety, by which he may have been eminently distinguished. In fine, he no longer encounters with the afflictions and trials of this probationary state, and consequently *ceases* to exhibit that instructive pattern of Faith, Patience, and Resignation, by which his connections may have been signally benefitted. These are the respects in which a godly Man *ceases* by death. Far be it from us to admit the impious thought that they have for ever *ceased* to exist.—No; that is the heart-chilling tenet of scepticism, dishonourable to God, and injurious to man. On the interesting article of IMMORTALITY, the religion of Christ aids and confirms the dictates of nature. In the *glorious Gospel of the blessed God*, we are positively assured of a state of future felicity beyond the grave, revealed to us through the sacrifice and mediation of Jesus Christ, *who came to seek and to save that which was lost*—who *shed his blood for the remission of sin*, and who has finally and fully brought life and immortality to light. *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has begotten us again to a lively hope of a resurrection from the dead, and to an inheritance that is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.*

But these godly Men, whose death we lament, have *ceased*—have *failed from among the children of men*. They are gone to the possession of this blessedness to which we at present are only aspiring.



ing. May we be equally prepared for the awful change! Whilst, however, we remain below, and are called to fill up the stations they have quitted, it behoves us to use the prayer of the Psalmist: *Help, Lord; for the godly Man ceaseth: for the faithful fail from among the children of men.* This leads me to enquire,

Thirdly, and lastly, What kind of *help* is it, that we implore of the Almighty in our present distressing situation?

How just and beautiful is the Psalmist's prayer in my text! To God, the creator, preserver, and benefactor of all mankind, we are taught to look up for assistance and support. His power is infinite, his wisdom is unsearchable, and *his mercy endureth for ever.* Man, from his frame and constitution, is feeble and ever liable to change. But amidst the fluctuations of individuals, and amidst the revolutions of kingdoms, *God is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. With him there is no variableness, nor even the shadow of a turning.*

What then are we to understand by the prayer in my text; or rather, what kind of *help* do we implore from the Divine Being? *Help, Lord; for the godly Man ceases: for the faithful fail from among the children of men.*

First,—We should pray that the Lord would raise up *able* and *faithful* ministers, in the room of

of those whose decease is now the subject of our improvement.

It is the established order of Providence, that this lower world is to be peopled by a succession of Beings, who, after having acted for a time their several parts on the theatre of life, should then retire, and make room for those who are to succeed them. This grand law of our being is never violated; no, not even in behalf of the best and wisest of the human race. Generations of men, therefore, are perpetually passing away. *The Fathers, where are they? The prophets, do they live for ever?* Ministers of the gospel, however inspired by genius, enriched by learning, or exalted by fame, become inhabitants of *the house appointed for all living*. Accident, disease, or age, assail with unremitting industry their mortal frame, and never quit their victims till they are laid low in the dust. But amidst this general desolation, how consoling is the reflection that—GOD LIVES FOR EVER. To him we are encouraged to direct our prayers, and from him we shall receive every necessary assistance and support.

The same God, who in every age since the promulgation of Christianity has raised up able ministers of the New Testament, will continue to befriend his church; nor will he forsake the people he hath loved. It is in the power of this great



great and glorious Being, to endow some of the rising generation with those talents, and to furnish them with those graces, which are necessary to proclaim acceptably the tidings of salvation. He can also incline the hearts of the opulent, to place them with tutors who will enrich their minds with the choicest principles of science, and teach them to appropriate this knowledge to the administration of sacred things. This hath the Lord accomplished in times past, and this will he continue to perform, till the sublime purposes of the Christian religion are completely answered. How many pious and useful labourers has God sent forth into his vineyard! How many distinguished ministers, since the days of the Apostles, hath he commissioned *to turn men from darkness to light, and from the power of sin and Satan to the true and living God!*

Secondly, We should pray that the Lord would bless the labours of these *able* and *faithful* ministers, when once raised up, to supply the place of those who have been removed into glory.

In the present age, the doctrine of a divine influence has been grossly misrepresented, and shamefully abused; but that is no reason why it should be discarded. The reveries of enthusiasm, and the cavillings of infidelity, affect not the reality of divine truth. In God *we live, move, and have our being.* Without him *we can do nothing.*

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The natural and moral world are under his immediate guidance and protection. In the scripture, we are instructed to ascribe success of every kind to the interposition of the supreme Being. *The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor riches to men of understanding.* The triumph of truth, and the spread of righteousness, are of the Lord. They depend however on so many causes, that it is almost impossible to specify any one cause exclusively of the rest. When we, therefore, pray that the labours of christian ministers might be successful, we pray that the Lord would preserve them from error, and guide them into all truth; that he would inspire them with zeal and activity; and that he would enable them to be *faithful unto death, that they might receive the crown of life.*

It is a lamentable fact, that of late several young ministers, of considerable talents and acceptability, have declined the honourable work of the sanctuary. Whether this desertion be ascribed to infidelity, or to interest, or even to praise-worthy motives, the event is to be deeply regretted. *O thou Shepherd and Bishop of souls,* do thou bless and keep steady those labourers who yet remain in thy vineyard! May they continue *stedfast and immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord!*

Thirdly, When we use the prayer in my text—

*Help,*



*Help, Lord ; for the godly Man ceaseth : for the faithful fail from among the children of men ;* we pray that the Lord would speedily accomplish the dispensations of his providence, which refer to the final triumph of the Messiah's kingdom.

As the *glorious Gospel of the blessed God* was not designed for an exclusive portion of the human race, we naturally expect, and it was positively predicted, that it shall have an universal spread—a spread worthy the perfections of that great Being, *whose tender mercies are over ALL his works.* This period has not yet arrived. We are under the necessity of looking forward into futurity, and it is with a peculiar fondness the pious and benevolent heart anticipates so illustrious an event. In the present convulsed state of Europe, and amidst the devastations of an unhappy and destructive war, much attention has been paid to the meaning and extent of prophecy. How far the modern interpreters of prophetic passages are justified in the application of them to certain recent events, I have not the presumption to decide. One thing however is certain, that all *the kingdoms of the earth* shall become the *kingdoms of God, and of his Christ ;* and that previous to this interesting change, tyranny, oppression, and injustice, shall cease to afflict the children of men. This long-expected and much-desired transformation, accords perfectly with the peaceable and benevolent spirit of the

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gospel,

gospel, and will, therefore, ever lie dear to the hearts of sincere and pious christians. Prayers will accordingly ascend to Heaven. United and reiterated exertions will be made by every class of individuals who have imbibed the pure and unadulterated spirit of christianity. Let us do every thing in our power to hasten the arrival of so desirable an event. God, by the greatness of his power, might have long ago accomplished the universal spread, and establishment of the christian religion. But infinite wisdom has thought proper to accomplish it by the gradual operation of human means. Hence arises the utility of industry and perseverance in our spiritual as well as temporal callings. With this view, our blessed Saviour exclaims: *I must work the works of him who sent me; for the night cometh, when no man can work.*

Surely *this* is not a time to be lukewarm in the sacred cause of virtue and of religion. When young ministers desert the stations assigned them by Providence; when senior ministers are called to exchange the labours of earth for the joys of Heaven; when Atheism, Deism, and Vice, their usual attendant, are rearing their standards and making their impious triumphs; then is it incumbent upon us to act with redoubled energy—for, notwithstanding the most unpromising appearances, God will **CERTAINLY** give to his Son the hea-  
then



*then for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession\*.*

That God therefore would raise up faithful ministers; that he would bless their labours; and that he would hasten the accomplishment of those prophecies which refer to the final triumph of the Messiah's kingdom; appear to be the most natural objects of the supplication in my text; *Help, Lord; for the godly Man ceaseth: for the faithful fail from among the children of men.*

Are motives wanted to urge you on to increasing zeal and activity?

Imitate the unhappy industry of those persons, who are as assiduous in weakening and destroying the *Empire of Righteousness*, as its friends ought to be in aiding and supporting it.

Reflect also on the brevity and uncertainty of life. On this sad topic, we have of late been repeatedly and eloquently admonished. *What is our life* (says the Apostle James) *but a vapour, which appeareth for a time, and then vanisheth away!*

\* The recent formation of the *Missionary Society* is deserving of much praise, and an account of their proceedings will be soon published by order of its committee. It has been said, and it is believed with truth, that the number of inhabitants on this globe are 800 millions; of these 170 millions are *Christians*, (that is, people generally denominated Christians) 9 millions of *Jews*—140 millions of *Mahometans*—and 481 millions of *Pagans*. Of those professing the Christian Religion, there are 50 millions of Protestants—30 millions of the Greek and Armenian churches—and 90 millions of Catholics.

The term of threescore years and ten quickly expires. Should we even escape the ordinary diseases which embitter human life, yet, alas! age will insensibly steal upon us, and push us into the tomb.

Nor should you fail to realize the great rewards which await your pious and benevolent labours, in an eternal world. Are we impelled to action by the praise of our fellow men? Let us be still more animated by the prospect of the divine approbation. *They that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard it; and a book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord, and thought upon his name.* O wonderful condescension! Our unworthy names shall be there written; our little labours of love shall be there faithfully recorded. When the Lord returns, *to discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth him, and him that serveth him not; we shall be among his jewels, and he will spare us as a man spareth his own son that serveth him; for they that turn many to righteousness, shall shine as the stars in the firmament, for ever and ever.*

In the mean time, let us not be *slothful in business, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.* If we succeed in our attempts to reform mankind, mighty will be the accession to our felicity. If we fail, we shall have however the satisfaction  
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to know, that we have done what became us. *He too, whom we serve, is not unrighteous to forget our work and labour of love; and though Israel should not be gathered through our instrumentality, yet shall we be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and the eternal God shall be our strength and salvation.*

But how is it possible that we can be disposed to promote religion in the world, if we understand not its real nature, and experience not its genuine influence? Of an orator, it is observed by Quintilian, an heathen author, that he must be a *good* man. With equal justice may we assert, that the zealous promoter of religion must have *at heart* the success of that gospel which he warmly recommends, and assiduously endeavours to propagate among others. Upon this subject, however, as well as on every other of a similar kind, *example* rises superior to *precept*. Permit me then to close, by reminding you of no less an example than that of Paul, the great apostle of the Gentiles\*.

In one part of the apostle Paul's writings, he

\* This example of the apostle Paul, with which this discourse concludes, was drawn up sometime ago; but was not published to the world at large, for a few copies only were printed, and circulated among the author's own connections. The many bereavements which the churches of Christ have lately suffered, make such recommendations of zeal more necessary than ever. May the great Head of the Church accompany it with his blessing!

apologizes

apologizes for the ARDENT ZEAL, which he and his fellow labourers discovered, in spreading the religion of Jesus amongst the surrounding nations. This apology is founded on the grand motives by which they were actuated, and on the beneficial effects which resulted from their combined exertions in behalf of Religion and Virtue. Under these forcible impressions, and with these elevated views, the Apostle exclaimed,

THE LOVE OF CHRIST CONSTRAINETH US!

CHRIST is *the only begotten son of God, the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person.* His love induced him to descend from heaven, that he might *seek and save those who were lost.* Mankind, having through sin forfeited the divine favour, might have been abandoned to *the blackness of darkness for ever.* But the *Son of God* kindly interposed for their relief. After a train of prophecies had been delivered—a series of miracles performed—and a succession of events taken place, the Messiah appeared in the fulness of time *a light, or a luminary, to enlighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his present dispersed people Israel.* By him was accomplished the vast design of reconciling Man to his Maker, *of bringing him from darkness to marvellous light, and from the power of sin and Satan to the true and living God.*

This reconciliation the SAVIOUR effects by  
the



the doctrines he taught—the precepts he enjoined—the institutions he appointed—the sacrifice he offered up—and the discoveries he has afforded of the invisible world. *Touched with a feeling of our infirmities, Jesus the high Priest of our profession*, marks the dangers and compassionates the distresses incident to the different conditions of humanity. Are you dark? He, by his doctrines, sheds light. Are you smitten with a sense of guilt? He, by the exercise of his mercy, confers pardon. Are you oppressed with a spirit of dejection? He, by his promises, cheers the hearts of the disconsolate. Are you affrighted by the approach of death? He assures you, it is the gate of life. Do you shrink back from the tremendous realities of eternity? He reminds us of *the many mansions in his Father's house*, where his love, which beams faintly on us here, shall burst on our astonished sight in its full splendour and glory.

But how did this *love of Christ* constrain Paul and the primitive Christians? In the same manner should be influenced every professor of religion, from the time of the apostles to the consummation of all things.

Our translators, by adopting the term *constrain* in the present connection, have not discovered their usual felicity of expression. It implies a force inimical to the freedom of the human faculties.

faculties. The prisoner is *constrained* to keep within his prison walls, and the culprit to suffer the punishment due to his crimes. *Constraint* indeed of every kind, is generally productive of distressing sensations. The passage might be better rendered—the Love of Christ *bears us away*. Hereby intimating, that the genuine professors of Christianity, are forcibly though pleasingly impelled to entertain the ideas, cherish the dispositions, and perform the train of actions recommended and enforced in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

*The love of Christ* should bear you away to ADMIRATION.

Admiration is a passion congenial with the human mind, and is generated by the contemplation of great and excellent objects. A spirit of admiration is excited by the spaciousness of the firmament—the immensity of the ocean—the magnitude of the heavenly bodies—the fecundity of the earth, and the sublimity of superior characters. But a still greater and more excellent object is the love of Christ, *who died for our sins and rose again for our justification*. To describe this love in its full extent, exceeds the ability of man. His person, life, death, resurrection, ascension, and second coming, are concerned in raising you from sin to holiness—from sorrow to joy—from Earth to Heaven. If the *love of Christ* has never touch-

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ed your hearts to admiration, it is because you have never contemplated it. In a noble strain of sacred eloquence the Apostle broke forth; *O the height and the depth—the length and the breadth—of the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.*

*The love of Christ* should bear you away to GRATITUDE.

Admiration refers to uncommon excellence. Gratitude regards our being benefitted by that excellence. That we may share the blessings flowing from the love of Christ, manifested in the redemption of mankind, is evident from the consideration that *he died for the sins of the whole world.* Penitent sinners, therefore, of every description, should be borne away by a principle of gratitude. Spiritual no less than temporal favours, demand the tribute of thankfulness. Are you grateful for the light of day which the Sun pours around you—the salubrity of the air—the cheerfulness which health inspires—and the social pleasures of friendship? Be still more grateful for the forgiveness of sin—the degree of purity obtained—the aid vouchsafed in seasons of difficulty—and, above all, for *the sure and certain hope of a joyful resurrection to Eternal Life.*

*The love of Christ* should bear you away to OBEDIENCE.

Gratitude raises in the mind agreeable emotions towards the objects of our love. Obedience

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implies

implies the cheerful and uniform exhibition of a temper and demeanour conformable with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The religion of the New Testament is emphatically termed *the doctrine according to godliness*. Where godliness is wanting the doctrine has not been cordially received. Are you not grieved with the inconsistency of the man, who adds not obedience to his admiration and gratitude? The disciples of Christ, impressed with a powerful sense of obligation, are at all times and on all occasions, attentive to the moral and positive commands of their ascended Lord. One essential branch of evangelical obedience, is *the love of the Brethren*. In this state of comparative darkness and imperfection, vain is our expectation of an entire coincidence of sentiment, and of an universal agreement in practice. Dismiss, therefore, puerile prejudices. Banish impertinent distinctions. Abridge not the rights of Christian fellowship. *A new commandment* (said our blessed Saviour) *give I unto you, that ye love one another.*

Finally; *The love of Christ* should bear you onward towards HEAVEN.

It is a certain and a melancholy fact, that the most enlightened understanding—the most extensive benevolence—the most sublime virtue—and the most exalted piety, shield not their possessor from the darkness and ignominy of the grave.

“Death



“ Death is driving on his triumphal car, and every moment crushing with his wheels, or mowing with his scythe, youth, beauty, strength, grandeur, SCIENCE, GENIUS, VIRTUE, and PIETY, with undistinguishing and resistless fury.” But, blessed be God, the empire of Death is not eternal. *The sun of righteousness* hath arisen upon the tomb, and by its superior radiance chased away those thick clouds, which for ages had been hovering around it. Notwithstanding the awful silence which reigns in the abodes of corruption, (whither we have so lately conveyed the remains of our dear and departed brethren,) *the trumpet shall sound—the dead shall arise—and those who have fallen asleep in Jesus shall be beautified with the garments of salvation, and admitted into the paradise of God.* Ye mutilated families, dry up your tears ! Ye disconsolate mourners, take down your harp from off the willows, and sweep it to the praise of him who is *the resurrection and the life !*

*Crowns of Glory, palms of Victory and robes washed white in the blood of the Lamb,* are the splendid representations of that future bliss which is exhibited in the Sacred Writings, and which awaits those servants of Christ who *have fought the good fight, kept the faith, and finished their course with joy.* Where the abodes of glorified spirits are situated in the dominions of God, and what is the precise

nature of their felicity, are points enveloped in a darkness which human sagacity is unable to penetrate. On these curious topics, learned and ingenious Divines have indulged much useless speculation. Sufficient is it for us to know, that the *same* God presides over both worlds; that *an inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled*, is reserved for the righteous; and that this *inheritance* will be conferred at a time and in a manner most conformable to the dictates of infinite Wisdom.

In the mean time, rest assured, that the phrase ETERNAL LIFE, upon which Paul and the first Christians dwelt with so much rapture, imports a bliss of no inconsiderable magnitude. It includes the absence of every evil, and the presence of every good. On earth, the purest are not free from sin—the most pious are not destitute of spiritual declensions—and the most generous are often requited with unkind returns from the objects of their beneficence. In heaven, you will be secure from transgression—unexposed to danger and distress—and embellished with every grace and virtue. There, dwells the Saviour in the refulgence of his mediatorial glory. There, will be assembled his saints *of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues*, who clave to him on earth, who rejoiced in tribulation—and who



who are now raised to *the fulness of joy which is at God's right hand, and to the pleasures which are for evermore.*

CHRISTIAN BRETHREN, recollecting the illustrious example of the first propagators of the Christian religion, who by *faith and patience inherited the promises*—be admiration—gratitude—obedience—and the expectation of a blessed immortality, the governing principles of your lives. Numerous are the efforts of the enemy to embitter your pilgrimage on earth. *Infidelity* attempts to poison you with her pernicious principles. *Enthusiasm* endeavours to perplex you with senseless distinctions. *Superstition* aims at encumbering you with childish ceremonies. Nor does *Worldly-mindedness*, like the blasting mildew, cease to diffuse a contaminating influence. Of these dangers beware. Against these attacks, arm yourselves with a firm and rational attachment to THE ABSENT SAVIOUR. Fix your eye on the clearness of his doctrines—the justness of his commands—the utility of his institutions—the beauty of his example—the efficacy of his sacrifice—the truth of his resurrection—the prevalence of his intercession—and the certainty of his second coming, *without sin, unto Salvation*. Be your minds enriched with his instructions—your memories stored with his precepts—and your affections glowing with the fervor of genuine devotion.

devotion. *Whom having not seen ye love—in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.*

*Now unto the King immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be ascribed glory, honour, dominion, and power, now and for ever. Amen.*



FINIS.



INSCRIBED TO J. DUNBAR, L.L.D. F.R.S. EDINB.

And late Professor of Philosophy in the University of Aberdeen.

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